

Message Text

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14

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2724

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, AF, IR

SUBJ: PARLIAMENT ACHIEVES QUORUM - HELMAND TREATY UNDER
CONSIDERATION

REF: KABUL 1998

1. PARLIAMENT ACHIEVED QUORUM APRIL 8, APPROVED OFFICERS ELECTED BY HOUSE COMMITTEES BUT IMMEDIATELY BECAME BOGGED DOWN OVER LANGUAGE ISSUE OF CIVIL SERVANTS LAW -- PENDING ITEM FROM LAST YEARS' S SESSION WHICH WAS SO THORNY IT PREVENTED PARLIAMENT' S CONSIDERING MOST SIGNIFICANT LEGISLATION. RABID LEFTISTS FAILED TO BE ELECTED AS COMMITTEE OFFICERS AND IN MOST CASES WERE NOT EVEN NAMED TO IMPORTANT COMMITTEES.

2. APRIL PARLIAMENT AGAIN HAD QUORUM BUT SESSION ENDED ON MORE PROMISING NOTE. SPEAKER WARDAK, WHO HAD CANVASSED DEPUTIES ON LANGUAGE ISSUE, PROPOSED COMPROMISE SOLUTION WHICH ACCEPTED BY OVERWHELMING MAJORITY DEPUTIES. COMPROMISE REWORDS LAW TO READ " HENCEFORTH ALL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES REQUIRED READ, WRITE AND SPEAK BOTH PUSHTU AND FARSI ACCORDING LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINED." THIS SOLUTION PREVIOUSLY FAILED TO BE APPROVED BUT NOW APPEARS SATISFACTORY TO PUSHTUN DEPUTIES. EVEN NORMALLY PESSIMISTIC HOUSE SECRETARY MOBIN SHAH AMIR OBVIOUSLY ELATED

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THAT LANGUAGE ISSUE APPARENTLY SOLVED, ALTHOUGH HE STILL
ANTICIPATES
TROUBLE ON HELMAND TREATY.

3. HELMAND TREATY NOW BEING CONSIDERED BY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
COMMITTEE AND WILL THEN GO TO LEGAL COMMITTEE (HOUSE OFFICERS
THROUGH INFORMAL AGREEMENT MOST DEPUTIES REPORTEDLY DECIDED
AGAINST
NECESSITY SENDING TREATY TO AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE). THIS PROCESS
COULD TAKE FOUR OR FIVE WEEKS AS COMMITTEES NOT ALLOWED WORK ON
SAME DRAFT LAW OR TREATY SIMULTANEOUSLY ACCORDING INTERNAL
HOUSE RULES.

4. COMMENT: SPEEDY RESOLUTION LONG FESTERING LANGUAGE PROBLEM
HAS DEFINITE ODOR MASSIVE GOVERNMENT AND PALACE INTERVENTION,
WHICH WE ALSO UNDERSTAND CONTINUING TO BE APPLIED ON HELMAND
TREATY ISSUE. SOME RESENTMENT BEGINNING BUILD UP AMONG DEPUTIES
OVER WHAT THEY SEE AS SHAFIQ GOVERNMENT RESORT TO TRADITIONAL
HEAVY- HANDED METHODS RATHER THAN EARLIER PROMISES AND EMPHASIS ON
DIALOGUE AS EQUALS WITH PARLIAMENT. SHAFIQ CONSEQUENTLY RUNNING
SERIOUS RISK OF WINNING PARLIAMENTARY BATTLE BUT LOSING WAR
THROUGH METHODS FAMILIAR AND INCREASINGLY IRRITATING TO
DEPUTIES. THIS COULD HAVE FAR- REACHING CONSEQUENCES FOR ENTIRE
SHAFIQ PROGRAM.

DECON MAY 1, 1973.

NEUMANN

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